

Notice of Allowability**Application No.**

10/005,776

Examiner

Timothy J Henn

Applicant(s)

LUO ET AL.

Art Unit

2612

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to 7 November 2001.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-14.
3. ☒ The drawings filed on 29 October 2002 are accepted by the Examiner.
4. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 6. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☒ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date 11/7/01, 2/9/04
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____.
7. ☐ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Allowable Subject Matter

1. Claims 1-14 are allowed.
2. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

Exposure and gain control systems which count pixels which fall above and below certain thresholds are known in the art. For example, Dong (US 5,734,426) teaches an exposure control system which counts the number of pixels which fall above VHIGH in a first counter NW and the number of pixels which fall below VLOW in a second counter NB and then compare NW and NB to thresholds KW and KD to determine whether to or not to increase or decrease the exposure time (Figure 2). However, Dong does not disclose second high and low thresholds and second high and low counters which are used to determine the amount of increase or decrease to be applied to the exposure control.

Masaki et al. (US 2002/0105581 A1) discloses an exposure control system which counts a number of dark pixels ND and compares this count to a number of preset ranges to determine the amount the exposure time should be increased by (Figure 12, Paragraphs 0137-0163). However, Masaki et al. uses a single count of dark pixels ND to determine whether to increase or decrease the exposure time instead of the four separate counts (i.e. pixels above a first high threshold, pixels above a second high threshold, pixels below a first low threshold and pixels below a second low threshold) used by the present invention.

Art Unit: 2612

Therefore, in regard to claims 1-14, the prior art does not teach or fairly suggest an automatic exposure or gain control system with multiple high and low thresholds as described in claims 1-14.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

3. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. The following prior art further shows the current state of the art in automatic exposure or gain control systems:

- | | | |
|------|------------------|--------------------|
| i. | Stevenson et al. | US 6,782,063 |
| ii. | Kakura et al. | US 5,917,372 |
| iii. | Easwar | US 2003/0098914 A1 |
| iv. | Ikeda | JP 11-248904 A |

4. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Timothy J Henn whose telephone number is (703) 305-8327. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 9:00 AM - 6:00 PM.

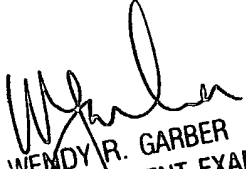
If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Wendy R Garber can be reached on (703) 305-4929. The fax phone

Art Unit: 2612

number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

TJH
10/25/2004


WENDY R. GARBER
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2600